THE

CHILD OF NATURE.

A

DRAMA

IN

FOUR ACTS.

FROM THE FRENCH OF

MADAME THE MARCHIONESS OF SILLERY,

FORMERLY

COUNTESS OF GENLIS,

PERFORMING AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN.

SIXTH EDITION.

BY

MRS. INCHBALD.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

ZÉLIE, the French drama, from which the Child of Nature has been taken, was, with great taſte, ſelected from the works of the Marchioneſs of Sillery (late Counteſs of Genlis) by a Lady, who preſented the Manager of Covent-Garden Theatre with a *literal tranſlation*—but however correct or elegant, *a mere tranſlation* muſt have precluded all proſpect of ſucceſs—the Manager therefore ſent the play of *Zélie* to the preſent tranſlator, who, with much care and attention, prepared it for the Engliſh ſtage—That care has been amply recompenſed by the reception the piece has received, and more eſpecially in thoſe ſcenes, which ſhe has taken the liberty to add from her own invention.

CHARACTERS.

MEN.

Duke Murcia, - - - Mr. Ryder.
Marquis Almanza, - Mr. Farren.
Count Valantia, - - Mr. Lewis.
Seville, - - - - - - Mr. Fearon.
Granada, - - - - - Mr. Macready.
Peaſant, - - - - - Mr. Aickin.

WOMEN.

Marchioneſs Merida, - Mrs. Mattocks.
Amanthis - - - - - Miſs Brunton.

Second Peaſant, Female Attendant, and other Domeſtics.

SCENE, SPAIN.—*At the Country Seat of the* Marquis Almanza.

THE

CHILD OF NATURE.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *A* SALOON.

Enter Seville, *followed by* Count Valantia, *and* Granada.

Seville.

MY Lord, it was very fortunate the accident happened ſo near this houſe.—Pleaſe to reſt yourſelf in this apartment while I give the neceſſary orders about mending your carriage—but indeed it is ſo thoroughly broken, I am afraid it cannot be refitted before to-morrow.

Count. No matter—I can paſs my time ſo pleaſantly in this delightful manſion, I ſhall not be impatient to leave it.—Beſides, I ſhall be extremely happy in ſeeing your Lord the Marquis Almanza—did not you ſay, you expected him home ſome time to-day?

Sev. Yes, we expect him every hour. Duke Murcia, his uncle, is already arrived; and as your Lordſhip is not in a hurry about your chaiſe, I'll

go inſtantly and let the Duke know you are here. [*Going.*

Count. By no means—Wait till the Marquis arrives, and he will introduce me.

Sev. Has your Lordſhip any farther commands?

Count. No—only be ſo kind as to ſee to the repairing my chaiſe.

Sev. I ſhall. [*Bows and exit.*

Count. And you would be vaſtly ſurpriſed if you knew the pains we had taken to break it.—Well, here I am in the caſtle of Almanza, and ſo far ſucceſs has crowned my adventure.

Gran. And what the deſign of that adventure can be, I am at a loſs to gueſs! All this ſtratagem and myſtery looks very much like ſome ſcheme contrived by love; yet that's not probable, as you are on the point of marriage with a woman of fortune, family, and beauty, and of whom you have profeſſed to be enamoured—and yet, within a few weeks of your union, you quit Madrid and her, come poſt to this village, and as ſoon as you arrive in ſight of this caſtle, order your attendants to break your carriage, and then run hither and aſk for aſſiſtance to mend it—which the domeſtics kindly grant, and your Lordſhip rejoices at the progreſs of your adventure—which, if not directed by love, is ſomething like madneſs.

Count. I have for many years tried thy fidelity, and will now confide in it—Love *is* the ſource of all my ſchemes.

Gran. Do you then not love your intended bride, the beautiful Marchioneſs?

Count. The Marchioneſs Merida is a charming creature! and I loved her paſſionately! to diſtraction!—till I found ſhe loved me, and that ſatiated my deſires at once.

Gran. Indeed!

Count.

Count. I do not ſay I ſhall not marry the Marchioneſs—perhaps I may—yes, I may take her fortune—for you know, Granada, I have none of my own.

Gran. I have known it for theſe ſix years, my Lord, ever ſince I have been in your ſervice.

Count. Yes, I once loved; I doated upon Merida—but the firſt time ſhe kindly condeſcended to declare her paſſion for *me*, I fell aſleep.

[*Yawns.*

Gran. But who can be this new object who keeps you awake?

Count. One whoſe coyneſs may, I fear, *ever* keep me ſo. Have not you heard of the young orphan Amanthis, of whom ſo many wonderful conjectures have been formed?

Gran. The young lady whom the Marquis Almanza has brought up from her infancy, and keeps confined in a part of this caſtle, and has never ſuffered any living creature to behold?

Count. The ſame—but *I* have beheld her—I have written to her—I have ſpoken to her.

Gran. How was that poſſible?

Count. You know I hate a man ſhould have the fame of poſſeſſing a perfect beauty all to himſelf: and though this girl has never been ſeen by mortal, except the Marquis, and the old Duenna who is ſhut up with her, yet, by his ſolicitude to conceal her, ſuch an idea of her beauty has gone forth: therefore I reſolved to find out whether ſhe was that prodigy or not; and *if* ſhe was, to ſhare the honour of her belonging to me, as well as to him.

Gran. And would you, my Lord, for a poor orphan, of whoſe birth and fortune all the world are ignorant, reſign the noble and beautiful Marchioneſs?

Count. Yes; for I tell you ſhe loves me, and it is very troubleſome to be beloved—and although

curioſity and envy were my ſole motives for ſeeking to behold Amanthis, yet after ſuch a ſight, in which perfect beauty, and enchanting grace, timid innocence, with matchleſs ſenſibility, were all united, never can I forego the pleaſing contemplation, or the hope, which has allured me to this enterpriſe.

Gran. But it is by ſome ſuppoſed, that the Marquis, notwithſtanding his rank and fortune, means to marry Amanthis. Now as he is your friend, would you (while he ſuppoſes himſelf ſecure) be the cauſe of his loſing her, for whom he has ſhown ſo much anxiety?

Count. You miſtake, Granada; the Marquis is no friend of mine—he is, to be ſure, very obliging and civil when we meet—but no friendſhip, that ſhould deter a man of gallantry from making him miſerable, ſubſiſts between us. He is the friend, indeed, and diſtant relation of my intended bride the Marchioneſs, and at her houſe we have frequently met—but, notwithſtanding the apprehenſions of the Marquis's family, cauſe them to ſuſpect Amanthis already is, or may become, his wife—yet many people ſuppoſe ſhe is but his miſtreſs—and ſome believe (and indeed that is the general opinion) ſhe is his daughter.

Gran. A young man to be father of a daughter near ſeventeen.

Count. By no means impoſſible—for I dare ſay he is five-and-thirty, or, perhaps more.

Gran. But, my Lord, pray ſatisfy my curioſity how you found means to ſee her?

Count. By mounting that wall, the prodigious height of which attracted your attention as we paſſed by, at a diſtance—that wall ſurrounds the garden appropriated to Amanthis.

Gran. But how was it poſſible for you to aſcend it?

Count. Every thing is to be effected by perſeverance, and by money.

Gran. But in general your Lordſhip has neither the one nor the other.

Count. When I had aſcended it, and ſaw the old Duenna in a diſtant walk—by ropes faſtened on the other ſide, I let myſelf down into the garden for a few moments—then paint to yourſelf the ſurpriſe of Amanthis!—except in her childhood, the ſecond man ſhe had ever ſeen—and I believe ſhe was very glad to ſee him.—She appeared alarmed, but not diſpleaſed—She ſpoke too, and with a ſoftneſs in her voice that gave me hope equal to my wiſhes.—Somebody is coming—follow me into the park, and hear the ſcheme I came hither to accompliſh—you muſt aſſiſt me, and prove your ſkill as I have proved mine. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Duke Murcia *and* Seville.

Duke. Seville, you know—every body knows, how fond I am of my nephew—have not I, from his childhood, acted as a father to him?—and will he not be, at my death, ſole heir to all my dignities?—Does he not even pretend to reverence and obey me as his only relation, and the head of his family? Then why are the ſecret motives of this wonderful behaviour, which has ſurpriſed all the court, all his friends, and all his acquaintance, why not (though concealed from *them*) revealed to me?

Sev. I can, my Lord, give you but little light upon the ſubject—every thing relative to this young lady, has ever been held by the Marquis a moſt profound ſecret from every part of his family.

Duke. But what kind of an education can ſhe have received in ſuch confinement?—and you, who

who ſtand ſentry at the door of her apartments, how can you guard her, without ſeeing her?

Sev. As our poor ſoldiers guard the public treaſures, without ever ſeeing a piſtole. — She reſides in that part of the caſtle in which every window looks upon an extenſive garden, incloſed by the wall, remarkable for its prodigious height.— I have only intruſted to me the key of a chamber adjoining to her apartments, where I go daily to receive her orders, and take to her all thoſe things ſhe commands—except one—and that the Marquis has poſitively prohibited.

Duke. And what can that one be? I am all impatience to know.

Sev. Books of every kind.

Duke. Poor thing! poor thing! why how in ſuch ſolicitude, can ſhe paſs her time without reading?

Sev. She reads a great deal, Sir. The Marquis, while he is in town, ſends her books frequently, but they are all of his own hand-writing.

Duke. A man write books to a young woman? Why you ſimpleton, they are love letters.

Sev. No, indeed, my lord—ſome are on morality, ſome on divinity, and ſome hiſtory.

Duke. Write hiſtory!—my nephew write books! —There are often ſongs too I warrant, and ſome little pieces of poetry?

Sev. I never conveyed to her any thing like poetry, or love.

Duke. And, pray, when you wait upon her, what kind of converſation does ſhe hold on the other ſide of the wainſcot?

Sev. I never heard her ſpeak.

Duke. Did not you ſay you received her commands?

Sev. In writing—every morning I find a paper on

on which ſhe, or the Duenna, has written her orders.—Would you like to ſee what ſhe has ordered for to-day?

Duke. Very much—certainly—I am much obliged to you.

Sev. [*Takes out a paper*]. This is written by Amanthis herſelf.

Duke. And, pray, how do you know her hand from the Duenna's?

Sev. By the number of letters ſhe writes to my Lord, and of which I have the charge.

[*He gives the paper to the Duke.*

Duke. And what can they be but love letters? Seville, your account is a very ſuſpicious one.—[*Reads*] "Bring me ſome pens, ſome paper, and ſome pencils, for drawing;"—and who has taught her to write and to draw?

Sev. Your nephew, I have no doubt, Sir; and many other accompliſhments beſides; for ſhe frequently gives orders for different pieces of muſic, ſtrings for various inſtruments, and a thouſand other things, which prove ſhe has been the pupil of no mean artiſt.

Duke. I am out of all patience!—[*reads again*] "Dinner and ſupper at the uſual hours—and coffee at ſix o'clock," [*returning the paper*]—Why, Sir, your whole time is employed in fetching and carrying.

Enter Servant.

Serv. My Lord is arrived—and now entering the avenue.

Duke. He is alone? he has brought no company with him, I ſuppoſe?

Serv. Yes, Sir; there are two ladies in the carriage.

Sev. Ladies! it is a long time ſince I have ſeen a lady in this houſe.

Duke.

Duke. He has brought them to ſhut up, I ſuppoſe—more employment for you, Mr. Seville.—[*Looks out*] Oh, no! I ſee who it is—a relation—a diſtant relation—the Marchioneſs Merida.

Enter Marquis Almanza, Marchioneſs Merida, *and a female attendant.*

Duke. So nephew, you ſee I have made free in your abſence—did you expect to find me here?

Marq. No, Sir—but it gives me great pleaſure; and I regret I did not come ſooner on that account.

Duke. My dear Marchioneſs, by what ſtrange good fortune do I meet you at the caſtle?

March. By my complying with the requeſt of the Marquis.—[*To the Marquis*] But, my Lord, did not one of your ſervants acquaint you Count Valantia was here?

Marq. [*Smiling.*] Yes; and that, I hope, will ſufficiently repay you, for your condeſcenſion in making this viſit.—[*To* Seville.] Is the Count alone?

Sev. Only one attendant.

Duke. You ſee what your Ladyſhip's attractions are; he heard you were coming, and ſo he contrived to be here before you—Came, too, with the pretence of having broke down his carriage!—Ha, ha, ha—Very well, Marchioneſs.

March. [*To* Seville.] And did he really ſay his carriage was broken?

Sev. Yes, Madam; but I hope your Ladyſhip will pardon me—I have ſince learnt that his attendant was ſeen to take a large axe from a portmanteau, with which he chopped in pieces the wheels, and then called for help.

March. Well, this is an inſtance of romantic gallantry, for which I will forgive him a thouſand

ſlights—ha, ha, ha!—it diverts me beyond meaſure—and he really broke the wheel of his carriage for the purpoſe?

Sev. So I am told, Madam; but I hope—

March. No; I am not at all angry with you—don't be afraid—I ſincerely forgive your mentioning it.

Duke. You may depend on what ſhe ſays—I'll anſwer for the ſincerity of her forgiveneſs.

Marq. Seville; go immediately to the Count Valantia, and conduct him hither. [*Exit Seville.*] In the mean time, Madam, permit me to ſhew you to your apartments.

March. No, my Lord; that's a ceremony I muſt decline.—I will merely adjuſt my dreſs, and be with you in leſs than an hour [*Aſide*] Well, indeed, Count, this is flattering!

[*Exit, attendant following.*

Duke. [*Aſide.*] Now we are by ourſelves I will—yes, I will open my mind to him—[*endeavouring to call up a reſolution*] Marquis—nephew—I ſuppoſe you know who I am?

Marq. Certainly, Sir—did I ever ſeem to forget?

Duke. You know at your father's death I adopted you—I took you home, and obliged you to go through the moſt laborious exerciſes, and all the hardſhips of the moſt rigorous education; and for no other reaſon, than becauſe I loved you.

Marq. I know it, Sir.

Duke. And in your youth, did I ſuffer you to ſquander your money? No—Did I ever ſuffer you to have any?—No.

Marq. No.

Duke. Or did I ever comply with any of your fooliſh wiſhes?—Is there a ſingle indulgence you can lay to my charge?

Marq. No.

Duke. Then do you not feel for me that reſpect, that reverence, that fear, and that love, which is due for all my kindneſs to you?

Marq. Yes, indeed, Sir, I do.

Duke. I take your word—I believe you do—yet I ſhall be much more pleaſed with ſome proof.

Marq. Demand the proof, Sir.

Duke. That's right—I thank you—but the affair on which I want to ſpeak to you, I know you feel *extremely delicate* upon, and therefore I wiſh to treat it with the utmoſt delicacy.—Who is that young woman you keep in a ſeparate part of this houſe? is ſhe your miſtreſs, or your daughter?—or one whom you mean to marry?—and, by ſo doing, bring diſgrace upon your family—or do you intend—

Marq. Dear Sir, keep your promiſe of delicacy, and I have no objection to reveal to you, what I mean ſhortly to declare to all the world.

Duke. Why then I am under a vaſt obligation to you for your confidence!

Marq. For theſe few months paſt I have reſolved to change my conduct in regard to the perſon of whom you ſpeak; and for that purpoſe did I bring hither the Marchioneſs Merida, as the moſt proper perſon of my family to whom I could introduce Amanthis.

Duke. But not as your wife!—not as your wife, I hope?

Marq. No—as an unfortunate orphan, whom friendſhip and pity cauſed me to adopt—for thirteen years *I* have been poſſeſſed of this precious charge.

Duke. But why precious? ſpeak coolly—don't put yourſelf in a paſſion—ſpeak of her in the ſame language as when you ſpeak of other women.

Marq.

Marq. I ſhould, did not I ſee her unlike all others?

Duke. No more raptures—I want to hear who ſhe is.

Marq. Among the various friendſhips of my youth, do you not remember the name of Alberto?

Duke. Certainly—was he not obliged to fly his country on account of ſome unfortunate duel, and has died in exile?

Marq. So it is believed.—Conformity of ſentiments endeared us to each other in our earlieſt years; and his misfortunes at a later period encreaſed the friendſhip which chance had, perhaps, begun.—From an affluent fortune I ſaw him, by unthought-of caſualties, reduced to ruin.—I ſaw him follow to the grave a much-lov'd wife—beheld him returning from that fatal duel by which his life was forfeited to his country—and viewed him, with a burſting heart, prepare to leave that country for ever.—In this ſcene of ſorrow, I ſoftened, in ſome ſort, his agonizing woes, by taking from his hand all his poor, diſtracted mind had left to ſolace in, an infant daughter; ſwearing to become to her that careful guardian, that tender parent, and that faithful friend—which I have proved.

Duke. Very *careful* indeed—but did you promiſe him to lock her up?

Marq. The mode of her education has been an after thought entirely.—Alberto, with all the virtues for which I eſteemed him, was of a jealous, ſuſpicious nature; and, in reſpect to female reputation, rigorouſly romantic—As Amanthis grew up I ſaw with dread the charge I had undertaken, and the reported death of my friend increaſed my apprehenſions for my truſt—I had vowed to protect, to guard her; to whom could I transfer the

oath? and my rank at court would often take me from her.

Duke. And do you think if ſhe had been an ugly woman, you would have been ſo thoughtful about your oath?

Marq. Her danger had been then leſs—yet I'll not diſguiſe my ſentiments—for though too weak to overcome, I have yet virtue to condemn them. —I love Amanthis—doat to diſtraction—but the difference of our ages, and of our ſtates, [*Proudly*] places an inſeparable bar between us.

Duke. This is the wiſeſt ſentence I have heard you ſpeak for a long time.

Marq. And yet, Sir, there is one impediment greater than thoſe I have named—I do not think ſhe loves me—accuſtomed to ſee, and know no man but myſelf, on me ſhe laviſhes all her fondneſs, all her tendereſt affection—but that love is the mere effect of gratitude—to make me happy, I muſt be loved with a paſſion equal to my own.

Duke. And I have no doubt but that among ſome of our women of quality we may find juſt ſuch another ardent flame.

Marq. To-day I reſtore Amanthis to that liberty ſhe has never remembered, of courſe not once regretted—Come, Sir, let me introduce you to her.

Duke. With all my heart—I have no objection to ſee her—I like to ſee a pretty woman—but then, I command you not to ſhow, by your behaviour, that you love her—no attentions—no profeſſions.

Marq. None, Sir—Thank Heaven, I am the entire maſter of my conduct, though not of my heart. [*Exeunt.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I. *The gardens belonging to the Marquis.*

Enter the Marquis, *leading* Amanthis.

Marquis.

COME this way, my dear Amanthis—and do not be thus agitated.—I am now talking to you without a witneſs to our diſcourſe, for the laſt time.—Wherefore do you weep? what thus affects you?

Aman. Why will you take me from my retreat? did not you ſay I ſhould ſtay here as long as I was pleaſed with it?—and as long as I loved you? Ah! I expected to ſtay here for ever.

Marq. Hear me, Amanthis—I have hitherto ſecluded you from the tumult and diſſipation of the world, in order to form your heart and mind; and to give you leiſure to attain every uſeful ſcience and accompliſhment—you have ſurpaſſed my utmoſt expectations, and I would now enjoy the pride of what I have completed.—I muſt ſhow you to the world—we were born for ſociety, and you will be the ornament and delight of that, which you ſhall make your choice.

Aman. I know not whether I ſhall give delight, but I am ſure I ſhall not be delighted myſelf.

Marq. Why not?

Aman. Becauſe I ſhall not ſee you ſo often as I have hitherto done.

Marq. But you will be amongſt thoſe who will prove equally kind and indulgent to you, and who will ſeek every means to make you happy.

Aman. You did not talk thus to me always—nor do you look with ſuch tenderneſs upon me as you uſed to do—while you ſpeak I can ſee you are not pleaſed, or not happy; and it gives me a ſorrow I hardly know how to bear.

Marq. Nay, Amanthis, I am not changed—I ſhall always be your friend—your father—you are among thoſe objects I love.

Aman. And you are the *only* object I love—the only one I ever can love.

Marq. Do not promiſe that—when you have ſeen the world, ſome other, more deſerving——

Aman. Oh! do not go on—I cannot bear you ſhould have ſuch unjuſt ſuſpicions—do not *you* ſee the world? and yet I am ſure you prefer me to all the univerſe beſides—when I am there; why cannot you then confide in me, as I have done in you?

Marq. The circumſtance is different; I had ſeen all, before I beheld you; you have ſeen none but me.

Aman. Why, then, will you ſhew me others?—I had rather like none but you—I cannot be ſo happy when I have more to love.—let me ſtill ſtay here.—Ah—you do not anſwer—you wiſh me to like others as well as you—and I obey; I will do any thing with chearfulneſs that you command.—But when I am in the world you will not leave me wholly?—I ſhall ſometimes ſee you?—I hope ſo!

Marq. Leave you, Amanthis?——Ah! you little think how hard it would be to leave you.

Aman. Nay, I am convinced you love me—love me dearly—does not all I poſſeſs come from you? You have even taught me to think, to ſpeak, and to be happy.——Yet of all your gifts, that, the moſt dear to my heart, is a ſentiment I feel for

you,

you, and cannot tell what it is—I have not power to deſcribe either its tenderneſs or its force—'Tis impoſſible I ſhould make you comprehend it—for *you* never felt any thing like it.

Marq. 'Tis gratitude ſhe means. [*Aſide.*] My dear Amanthis, without ceaſing to feel, you muſt learn to hide thoſe ſentiments you ſpeak of; and never expreſs this tender friendſhip before others; which, though what we ourſelves delight in, they might turn to ridicule.

Aman. Would they?—they are ignorant then, and never felt what I do, elſe they would applaud it.

Marq. Among the reſt, to whom you will be ſoon introduced, is my uncle, and I regard him as my father.

Aman. Oh! that's a tender name—you have ſo often told me of mine; his love for me, and his diſtreſſes, that I revere the name of father, even in a ſtranger.

Marq. I have ſometimes mentioned to you the Marchioneſs Merida—She is now in this houſe, and as ſoon as I have introduced you to her, I deſire you will conſider her as your friend.

Aman. My friend? that is the name you bid me call you by—No—I cannot promiſe to call her friend—one friend is enough for me.

Marq. But the Marchioneſs—

Aman. No—Let me call her ſomething elſe—I ſhall not feel for her what I do for you—any thing but friend—that muſt belong to you.

[*Taking his hand.*

Marq. You will ſee here alſo, a young man called Count Valantia.

Aman. A young man!—Oh! I had forgot to tell you—

Marq. What?

Aman.

Aman. Of a young man I have ſeen. [*delighted.*

Marq. How!

Aman. But I was ſo pleaſed to ſee you return, he ſlipped my memory.

Marq. What of him? proceed.

Aman. A young man! ha, ha, ha—ſuch a ſtrange adventure!

Marq. Tell me immediately; when did he ſee you? what has he ſaid to you?

Aman. Not much—he ſaid very little—but he ſighed heavily—and ſent a letter.

Marq. Explain yourſelf.

Aman. It was only about a week ago, as I was ſitting by the little bower near to the garden wall, ſuddenly I heard an unknown voice call me by my name—it ſeemed to come from the air—I looked up, and beheld a young man upon the wall.—The moment I recovered from the fright, I aſked him what he wanted—he ſaid he came "to look at me"—but that appeared ſo ſtrange, I could not think it true—and then he gazed on me ſo wildly, I ran away and hid myſelf.—on which he drew a letter from his pocket, and threw it after me—I would not take it up till he was gone—then I caught it, and flew to my apartments, pleaſed beyond expreſſion.

Marq. Wherefore?

Aman. That I had eſcaped him.

Marq. [*Aſide.*] Who could it be! Ah! I have a ſuſpicion—Where is the letter?

Aman. Here—I do not underſtand it—perhaps you may. [*Gives the letter.*

Marq. [*Reading.*] "Know, beautiful Aman-
"this, there is no retreat, however hidden, into
"which love cannot penetrate—The hope of
"beholding you has made me brave all dangers.
"—If you will but kindly pity a paſſion, pure
"as it is ardent, it ſhall ſoon inſpire me with
"the

" the means to releaſe you from the tyranny of " that barbarian, who keeps you ſecluded from " every joy that's waiting to attend you in a gay " world. Conceal this adventure from the jea- " lous tyrant, and reflect, that the moſt tender " lover waits impatiently for the happy moment to " prove himſelf your deliverer." [*Returning the letter.*] And what do you think of this letter?

Aman. That the poor man is mad—and yet it is a kind of madneſs I never heard of before. [*Reading part of the letter.*] " There is no re- " treat into which love cannot penetrate."—What does he mean by love? he has left out a word—there is—*love of virtue*—*love of duty*—but love all alone by itſelf, means nothing at all.—Then again, [*Reading.*] " Conceal this adventure from the jea- " lous tyrant"—Who does he mean by tyrant?

Marq. He means me.

Aman. You? I never ſhould have ſuppoſed it—perhaps you know alſo what he means by a " lover." He ſays, " the moſt tender lover"—read, and tell me what he means by a tender lover. —Ah! you laugh—you are puzzled—you don't know yourſelf what a " lover" is.

Marq. Indeed I cannot undertake to be his interpreter. But tell me, Amanthis, if by chance you ſhould ſee this young man again, do you think you ſhould know him?

Aman. Yes, I am *ſure* I ſhould.

Marq. His perſon then made an impreſſion on your mind?—I ſuppoſe it was agreeable?

Aman. Very agreeable indeed—and yet there appeared a—a—kind of [*deſcribing paſſionate ardour*] a wildneſs in his looks that frightened me.

Marq. But ſuppoſe that wildneſs was removed, how would you like him then?

Aman. Oh, very much! *extremely!*—What makes you thoughtful, my Lord?

Marq. Come, Amanthis, we have been together a long time; you muſt now bid farewel to this part of the caſtle, and go with me to that which is inhabited.

Aman. But ſhall I have the liberty to return ſometimes and look at this—my heart aches to leave a place I have been ſo happy in—Oh, my dear, dear Lord, you know not half I feel. [*Puts her hand before her eyes to hide her tears.*]

Marq. Beloved Amanthis, be not thus uneaſy; I cannot bear to ſee it—for your happineſs is dearer to me than my life.

Aman. Say that you love me then—will you repeat it often too? as often, when I am in the world, as you have done here?

Marq. Ah, do not doubt it.—You are all to me—I have no other thought, no other wiſh—object of all my cares, of all my ſchemes, of all my hopes—and I prefer, to every other bleſſing, that moſt delicious one, to ſee, to hear you ſpeak, and to ſuppoſe you eſteem me.

Aman. [*With rapture.*] I am willing to leave my retirement—all my ſadneſs is gone—do with me what you pleaſe; for while you talk thus to me, I cannot be unhappy.

Marq. Retire into your apartment for a moment; I'll follow you preſently. [*She goes.*]—My agitation is ſo extreme, nothing can equal it, except my weakneſs. [*Aſide.*]

[*He looks after her; ſhe turns back.*

Aman. You look as if you had ſomething ſtill to ſay to me.

Marq. Ah! could I truſt my heart—away; the Marchioneſs is coming hither by appointment—I hear her, and cannot preſent you to her yet—I am too much embarraſſed.

Aman.

Aman. I hear no one; but if it is your deſire, I leave you. [*Exit* Amanthis *to the Caſtle.*

Marq. With what difficulty have I reſtrained myſelf from falling at her feet, and unfolding (in a language, of which ſhe is ignorant) the ſecret tranſports—which I hope ever to conceal.

Enter Marchioneſs Merida.

March. I have ſeen her; I have juſt had a peep at her—but I ſee nothing extraordinary—She wants powder, rouge, and a thouſand adornments.

Marq. To change one atom, would be to loſe a charm.

March. That ſentence proves the lover.

Marq. Take care what you ſay—reflect on the difference of our ages—that title would make me both ridiculous and guilty.

March. By no means—I think a girl of ſeventeen may very well have an affection for a man of forty.

Marq. I am not forty, Madam.

March. The lover again—one moment lamenting his age, and when reproached with it, proclaiming himſelf a youth. The whole matter is, my Lord, you are not too old to be in love, nor ſhe too young to underſtand it.

Marq. You wrong her—ſhe is ignorant.

March. So am I—yet I am in love.

Marq. She knows not what it is—never heard of love, as you would explain it—but calls, by that name, Gratitude.

March. Indeed, my dear Marquis, you have no penetration.

Marq. I ſee Count Valantia coming this way—you will allow at leaſt I have diſcretion, and that I know when it is politeneſs to retire.

March. If you ſhould like to be witneſs to a quarrel, ſtay where you are.

Marq. A quarrel! I thought you were on the beſt terms imaginable!—a'nt you on the point of marriage? and did he not break the wheels of his carriage——

March. Yes—but I begin to ſuſpect that was not upon my account.

Marq. No?—on whoſe account then? who has hinted that it was not upon yours? [*Alarmed.*

March. Nay, I proteſt I have not had five minutes converſation with any creature ſince I came into this houſe, but I believe my woman has with the Count's attendant; and though ſhe could not prevail on him to divulge his maſter's ſecret, yet, from his ſilence, ſhe could perceive I was not the object of his preſent journey.

Marq. Who then?

March. I am at a loſs to gueſs—that is what I want to have explained.

Marq. The Count is here. Adieu.—She has confirmed my apprehenſions. [*Aſide. Exit.*

Enter Count Valantia.

Count. The Marchioneſs! Pſhaw. [*Aſide.*] At length, I find the lucky moment you are alone—but I poſitively began to deſpair of it, for you ſeem to ſhun me.

March. Do you imagine I came to this houſe on purpoſe to meet you?

Count. Why not as likely, as that I ſhould come, on purpoſe to meet you?

March. Juſt the ſame likelihood, I believe. [*Aſide.*

Count. And not accident, but deſign brought me here.

March.

March. The ſtory of the broken chaiſe was, then, an artifice?

Count. Only an artifice, to behold the object whom I adore. Can you reproach me for that?

March. How came you to know I was coming? the Marquis only invited me about three hours before we ſet off.

Count. My Lord—I forget his name—told me of it—the Marquis had informed him.

March. My Lord who?

Count. My Lord—[*heſitating.*]—you don't know him.

March. Do you?

Count. My Lord Caſtile.

March. He is in France, I proteſt.

Count. I know that—I did not mean him—I meant his brother.

March. He has no brothers.

Count. Then it was his ſiſter—or his aunt——No matter—what ſignifies who told me, as long as I am here——I *am* here—an't I?——An't I here? and what could bring me here, but *you?*

March. I am wholly ignorant of your deſigns, but I can perceive from your reſerve, embarraſſment, your very air and voice, that you are practiſing deceit with me.

Count. But, my dear Marchioneſs, will you be ſo kind as to acquaint me, what this deceit is?

March. You know I can't tell—and it is that which tortures me.—If I did but know in what you uſed me ill.—Now, do tell me, that I may have the pleaſure to forgive you?

Count. I wiſh to heaven I had done ſomething wrong—but I cannot recollect—[*conſidering.*]—or I would confeſs it, on purpoſe to oblige you.—I am very ſorry for your diſappointment——but hereafter, when we have been married a few weeks, I'll take care you ſhall have ſomething to pardon

pardon very often—two or three times a day, perhaps.

March. Be gone, Sir—leave the room—your impertinence is no longer ſupportable—leave me inſtantly. [*Violently.*

Count. I obey. [*Bows and is going.*

March. If you go—if you dare to leave me in this uncertainty—all ties between us are for ever broken; nor ſhall you ever come into my preſence again.—[*he returns*] How could you think of leaving me.

Count. It was you thought of it.

March. I am all confuſion at the weakneſs I have diſcovered—and wiſh to be alone—leave me. [*Gently.*

Count. Do you mean, leave you—or—*not* leave you?

March. Do as you pleaſe—I ſhall go myſelf. [*Going.*

Count. And I'll attend you.

March. Ah! Valantia! if you loved me as you once profeſſed! to ſee me thus, would give you the utmoſt affliction.

Count. You do not know what paſſes in my heart. [*Affecting concern.*

March. Don't I?

Count. No—[*Aſide*] I ſhould be very ſorry if you did. [*Exit handing her off.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I. *Apartments in the Caſtle.*

Enter Duke Murcia *and* Marquis Almanza.

Duke.

I OWN ſhe is handſome, but then ſhe has no fortune—I confeſs ſhe is very engaging, but of what family is ſhe?—at beſt, not of a noble one; and her father even now may not be dead, as is reported, but living a wandering fugitive, and may yet return home to diſgrace his daughter.

Marq. The misfortunes of Amanthis can never make her leſs dear to me.

Duke. But would you ally yourſelf to ſuch a family,—would you plunge your own into ſhame and ſorrow?

Marq. My Lord, I have often promiſed, and have believed, that to the reſpect I bear my family, I would ſacrifice every ſelfiſh conſideration; but, on a farther trial of my ſtrength, I own to you, it is only from the idea that I am not beloved by Amanthis, I can ever reſolve to yield her up; for could I ſuppoſe ſhe loved me, all other happineſs, all pride, all ambition, all enjoyment, but in her, I would forego with tranſport.

Duke. And as all lovers are apt to believe what they ardently wiſh—I ſee what your family has to expect.

Marq. You miſtake—hope, never was more diſtant from my heart than at this moment—All the affection ſhe expreſſes, although the moſt tender,

tender, and endearing, I can ſee, is but inſpired by gratitude—of love, ſhe knows nothing.

Duke. Whoſe fault is that? were not you her tutor?

Marq. Certainly.

Duke. And taught her every thing but what you wanted her to learn:—but now if any one elſe ſhould teach it her, what would you ſay to that? would you give your conſent to their union?

Marq. The inſtant ſhe makes a choice worthy of her, from that inſtant I ſtifle my paſſion for ever.—Do you imagine I would oppoſe her happineſs? No—I was her father, before I was her lover.

Duke. That's right—nobly ſaid—and to be her father, is by far the moſt dignified character—and a much more natural character too, conſidering your diſparity of years. Here ſhe comes—I'll go away. She is very pretty to be ſure! but ſhe has cauſed me ſo much uneaſineſs, I don't like to ſee her. She agitates me as much as ſhe does you—but from a very different ſentiment. [*Exit.*

Enter Amanthis.

Aman. Oh! I have been ſo frightened!

Marq. What's the matter?

Aman. The young man—he that I told you of, is in this houſe.—I am ſure it is him—on croſſing one of the garden walks, I perceived him very near to me—yet he drew nearer ſtill; till he ſaw ſomebody coming, and then he ran away.—But he has frightened me ſo much, and made my heart feel ſo ſtrange!—as it never felt before.

Marq. Your heart? Why your heart?

Aman. [*Laying her hand on it.*] The fright has made it beat quick.

Marq. Ah! it is not fright. [*Aſide.*

Aman.

Aman. And yet he did not look frightful either. He had a beautiful dreſs on too—and he looked ſo—ſo—I don't know how.—His face is very handſome; his ſhape, and all his mien, engaging.

Marq. I no longer doubt but it is the Count. [*Aſide.*] Could you tell me, Amanthis, the colour of his dreſs?

Aman. Certainly—blue and ſilver.

Marq. 'Tis he.—[*Aſide.*]—My dear Amanthis, you will ſee this young nobleman very ſoon again; he is here on a viſit—have I never mentioned to you the Count Valantia?

Aman. Yes.

Marq. He is the man who has thus ſurprized you.

Aman. Is it poſſible? and with that ſtrange kind of wild behaviour, is he admitted into company?

Marq. If you ſhould at any time be alone with him, you may tell him your ſentiments on his behaviour—your ſentiments exactly ſuch as they are, and ſuch as his behaviour inſpires.

Aman. And if he ſhould chance to behave well, I'll tell him I like him.

Marq. [*Starting.*] I lay no *reſtrictions* on you—I only warn you that he is a light, inconſiderate, and vain young man—his company dangerous—for his principles are not good.

Aman. What a pity!—I'll tell him to grow better.

Marq. She is charmed, I find. [*Aſide.*

Aman. What did you ſay?

Marq. It is neceſſary, Amanthis, that, whatever are your thoughts of this young man, you do not reveal them to any of your acquaintance: and, when you meet with him, reſtrain all fear, all emotion of what kind ſoever: before company, do not ſeem even to know him.

Aman. I underſtand—You think, were I to diſcover I was afraid of him, it would grieve him; and you would not give him pain?

Marq. You promiſe then?

Aman. Certainly; for I myſelf would not give him pain, or vex him, for the world.

Marq. [*Aſide.*] This converſation kills me.

Aman. Here is ſomebody coming—How cruel!—I can never now be alone with you an inſtant.

Marq. It is the Marchioneſs — I muſt leave you.

Aman. Nay, that is ſtill worſe—Stay, though we are *not* alone.

Marq. I cannot.

Aman. But if you cannot ſtay, I can go with you.

Marq. Impoſſible—remain where you are. [*Aſide.* I ſee my fate. [*Exit.*

Enter Marchioneſs.

March. Did the Marquis leave you becauſe he ſaw me coming?—My dear creature, what is the matter with you? You look unhappy! Speak to me with confidence—truſt me with your ſecret uneaſineſs.

Aman. No, I muſt not—I muſt not diſcover the afflictions I feel, and the ſecrets of my heart—My Lord has commanded me not.

March. But he never meant you ſhould obſerve ſecrecy with *me!*—At his deſire I came hither to be your friend and confidant.

Aman. True—Oh! I am very unhappy!—My ſtate is changed, and all my pleaſures turned to ſorrow.

March. Why? You are ſurely the firſt woman who ever lamented the bleſſings of liberty.

Aman. And what is liberty when it takes from

me the company of him who is dearer to me than life, or brings him to me with a clouded brow, and a heavy heart?—But this moment he flew away abruptly, and frowned when I aſked to follow him, although he knows how much I was frightened ſome time ago by a young man, who is now in this houſe.

March. Who is that?—My dear, tell me who? [*Eagerly.*]

Aman. Count—I forget his name.

March. [*Aſide.*] Have I at laſt detected him?

Aman. Did you never ſee him?

March. Yes, I believe I have.

Aman. And a'nt you afraid of him? Does he not look wild and madly? Lays his hand upon his heart, and ſighs? [*Sighing.*

March. No, my dear; he does not do ſo with me—he once did—but that time is over.

Aman. But when that time was, were you not afraid?

March. No; I wiſh I had been.

Aman. But you are not to mention what I have been telling you for fear it ſhould grieve the Count. I promiſed I would not ſpeak of it to any one. But to you it ſurely cannot ſignify; my Lord could not mean I was not to tell *you.*

March. No—I was the propereſt perſon on earth to tell it to.

Aman. Yes; you would not hurt him, I am ſure; for he is agreeable, notwithſtanding all his wildneſs! and if he would but keep at a diſtance, I ſhould like to look at him, and hear him talk.

March. And did you tell the Marquis ſo?

Aman. Yes.

March. What did he ſay?

Aman. He bade me tell the Count all I thought of him.

March. And will you?

Aman. No.

March. Why not?

Aman. For fear, poor man, it ſhould make him uneaſy.

March. Oh, it won't, my dear—never fear that; it will not make him uneaſy—tell him you *hate* him.

Aman. But I don't.

March. Don't you?

Aman. No—do you?

March. Yes. And I would have you tell him you deſpiſe him.

Aman. No; I'll ſay I pity him—Won't that do as well?

March. The worſt of all; that will make him outrageous.

Aman. Will it?—*You* then have told him ſo?

March. He is coming this way.

Aman. Ah, let me fly. [*Going.*

March. Stay—did not the Marquis command—

Aman. True—and I'll *ſtay* and tell him what I think of him.

March. And what *is* that?

Aman.—That he makes me tremble.

March. You muſt not tell him ſo.

Aman. But he'll ſee it.

Enter Count Valantia.

Count. The Marchioneſs here! unfortunate, [*Aſide, then bowing to her.*] I this moment parted from my Lord the Marquis at the top of the lawn, and he charged me with a commiſſion—which was, when I ſaw your Ladyſhip, to tell you he wiſhed to ſpeak with you.

Aman. Let me go with you.

Count. It is ſome private converſation, which the Marquis, I believe, requires.

March.

March. I have private converſation too for him —Amanthis, wait till I return.

Aman. [*Aſide to the Marchioneſs.*] He does not look ſo wildly as he did. I am not *much* afraid.

March. Indeed! then I ſhall ſoon be back.

[*Exit Marchioneſs.*

Count. [*Looking after her—then falling on his knees to Amanthis*]. Behold me——

Aman. I durſt not look at you. [*Fightened.*

Count. Is it terror you expreſs? how is it poſſible that my tender paſſion can awake in that ſoft boſom an alarm? Do you fear me?

Aman. Yes; but go and behave thus to the Marchioneſs; ſhe does not fear you.

Count. Oh! do not torture me with a rebuke like that—'Tis you alone can make me happy—and if you refuſe, you drive me to deſpair.

Aman. No—I wiſh to give you hope.

Count. Do you bid me hope?

Aman. Yes.

Count. And you'll be kind?

Aman. To be ſure I will.

Count. What will you do to prove it?

Aman. Send for a prieſt to comfort you.

Count. A prieſt—will you then make me bleſt?

Aman. If I can—for I aſſure you I like you very well—and, did you not behave ſo ſtrangely, I ſhould like you better; for you are very handſome —therefore be not uneaſy, and think you are not admired; for I can ſee that would afflict you more than any thing.

Count. You admire me then? tranſporting happineſs!

Aman. Oh! now you are going to fright me again. [*Aſide.*] I muſt ſteal away!

Count. You tremble and look pale—may I interpret theſe ſweet emotions in my favour?

Aman. Yes, if you pleaſe.

Count.

Count. You then will make me happy?

Aman. I will do all I can.

Count. Poor Marchioneſs! I proteſt I begin to feel pity for her ſufferings on this occaſion. [*Aſide.*] Then know, angelic creature! you ſhall find in me, all that truth, that conſtancy, that everlaſting flame——

Aman. Oh, terrible!—don't be in ſuch a paſſion, pray.

Count. Theſe moments are precious!—Vow never again to ſhun me; never more to look unkindly; and I ſwear the moſt perfect love—

Aman. Here—ſmell of this bottle—it will do you good—it will relieve your head.

[*Holding out a ſmelling bottle.*

Count. What the devil does ſhe mean? [*Aſide.*] But will you keep this happy interview a profound ſecret?

Aman. Yes, indeed I will, to every creature, except the Marquis Almanza, and the Marchioneſs his couſin.

Count. To them above the reſt.

Aman. Oh, no—I tell them every thing.

Count. Indeed!

Aman. Yes—and the Marquis was amazed how you found means to climb the high garden wall.

Count. I am in a pretty ſituation then! [*Aſide.*] And what did he ſay when you told him?

Aman. I forget—but he ſaid, when I ſaw you again, I might tell you juſt what I pleaſed.

Count. She is his daughter then, and he approves my paſſion. [*Aſide.*] What you have acquainted me with makes me the happieſt of men.

Enter Marchioneſs.

Aman. I am glad you are returned [*running to the Marchioneſs, then turning to the Count.*]—Bleſs me, how calm he is grown all at once—you would not ſuppoſe he was the ſame perſon.

Count.

Count. Madam—[*confuſed.*]

Aman. He does not look on you, as he does on me—nor kneel—nor plead.

Count. Oh, the deuce take you. [*Aſide.*

March. What, in confuſion, Count?

Aman. But I'll leave you alone with him, and then perhaps, he will. [*Going.*

Count. No—for mercy ſake, don't leave us alone. [*Aſide to Amanthis.*]

Aman. Poor man! he is afraid of *you*—but pray be kind to him—and I dare ſay you will. [*Exit.*

Count. Yes—and a deliviſh deal too kind. [*Aſide.*

March. You find at laſt your falſehood is detected.

Count. I purpoſely expoſed it, that you might have the pleaſure of forgiving me.

March. Which I will never do.

Count. Then I have been at a great deal of trouble for nothing.

March. So you will find; for the perſon you love, loves another.

Count. And ſo does the perſon you love—and yet I don't reproach you with that.

March. Vain man—you do not know who I love.

Count. Nor do you know who I love—but I believe you gueſs.

March. Leave me.

Count. You'll call me back—but now poſitively if you do, I won't return. [*going.*]

March. To my heart you never ſhall.

Count. [*Turning back.*] Did you call? 'tis all in vain—I won't come back. [*Exeunt ſeparately.*

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *Gardens belonging to the Caſtle.*

Enter the Duke *and* Marquis *meeting.*

Duke.

NEPHEW, I was going in ſearch of you, for I have ſomething of importance to communicate; and yet I am half afraid to tell it you.

Marq. Dear Sir, wherefore?

Duke. Becauſe I know your weakneſs.

Marq. Then I gueſs the ſubject—but what have you to tell me of Amanthis?—I am prepared for the worſt.

Duke. I am glad to hear it, for this is very bad indeed—and yet, no more than I expected. Have you heard that Count Valantia is in love with her?

Marq. I have—ſhe herſelf told me ſo.

Duke. But did ſhe tell you that ſhe was in love with him?

Marq. No.

Duke. I thought ſhe would not tell you that.

Marq. But I had every reaſon, from her behaviour, to imagine he was not indifferent to her.

Duke. And I am certain he is not.

Marq. But who has told you ſo?

Duke. Himſelf.

Marq. The weakeſt authority you can have.

Duke. But ſhe confirmed it.

Marq.

Marq. Did ſhe? Alas! then my hopes are indeed at an end—for till this moment I find I have involuntarily hoped, 'ſpite of all reaſon—But why make the diſcovery to you?

Duke. I made it myſelf—with my own eyes. You know, I ſuppoſe, of the firſt meeting which the Count and ſhe had this morning?

Marq. Have they had another ſince?

Duke. Two more—I was preſent at the laſt, and am only this moment come from it.

Marq. Do not then conceal from me one ſingle circumſtance; but depend upon my firmneſs, and my courage.

Duke. You wiſh to hear every circumſtance; and ſo you ſhall. As I was looking out of my window into the garden—I never liſten, but I ſometimes hear what people ſay, when they don't ſuſpect I am near—Out of my window I ſaw and heard a quarrel, and an eternal ſeparation take place between the Count and our relation the Marchioneſs.

Marq. She then has become acquainted with his attachment to Amanthis?—All is confirmed indeed.

Duke. And, as ſoon as he had diſmiſſed her in diſgrace, I took a walk in the garden, and from a cloſe arbour I beheld your ward ſteal paſt, and the Count cloſe at her elbow—there I overheard—for I deteſt a liſtener—I overheard the Count beg for compaſſion, and remind Amanthis of a promiſe ſhe had given to make him happy: on which ſhe ſtarted and wept; and he fell upon his knees, and would have wept too, if he could; but as he found he could not, he did ſomething equally worthy of a lover; and drawing his ſword, pointed it at his heart. On this ſhe ſcreamed more violently than if the weapon had been aimed at her own; and ſeizing hold of it, fell motionleſs into his arms.

Marq. Oh, Heavens!

Duke. As ſoon as we had recovered her from her ſwoon, the Count informed me of his love, and that ſhe had given him every hope ſhe would become his wife, but had merely refuſed to name the time; which had enraged and driven him to ſuch extremes.

Marq. And what ſaid Amanthis?

Duke. She looked at him tenderly, ſighed heavily, and ſhed a ſhower of tears. On which he turned to her and cried, "If you no longer love "me, my life is odious to me, and I will inſtantly "put an end to it—Pronounce, ſhall I live or "die?"—She in a tranſport cried, "Live, live "by all means."—"And ſo I will," cried he—and put up his ſword. Then I, ſuppoſing all things happily ſettled, wiſhed them joy, and came away.

Marq. Thus at once do I ſee ſnatched from me the care, the project, the deſire, the hope, and the felicity of near my whole paſt life: in one object all were placed, and all are vaniſhed with her. Is this the recompence for what I have done?—at leaſt I will reproach her—with what? that I have not inſpired her with a paſſion? I was not *born* to inſpire.—Vain man, ſubmit with patience to thy deſtiny.

Duke. You are right; every man that's in love muſt have patience—But do you intend to ſee her again? How do you mean to conduct youſelf on this occaſion?

Marq. Baniſh all ſuſpicion of my conduct—to me her welfare was intruſted; I alone have a right to diſpoſe of her; a right no one ſhall dare to rob me of—but ſhe loves that is ſufficient to determine me.—As her father, as her friend, I diſapprove her choice, and will tell her ſo; but if ſhe perſiſts,

perſiſts, I yield; nor ſhall ſhe ever know, I have a leſs tender regard for her than heretofore.

Duke. But you will no longer conſider her as a perſon for whom you are to provide; you will not take any further care—

Marq. Count Valantia is poor; if he marries her, I give them the half of my fortune on their marriage the reſt at my death.

Duke. What, to a man and woman who have cauſed you more uneaſineſs than any two people in the world? Why ſurely you are mad. For my part, I am not againſt your giving ſomething; and I will give ſomething myſelf—but it ſhall not be much.

Marq. To what uſe ſhould I retain my fortune, when, from this day, I renounce all ſociety, all connections—

Duke. And won't you ever marry?—Nay, let me beg you to conſole yourſelf, and liſten to reaſon.

Marq. Reaſon?—Mine is loſt for ever.

[*Exit.*

Duke. Why I am petrified!—I came running hither full of joy, and even made a *little more of the ſtory* in order to excite his rage and reſentment. I did excite them; but, in the midſt of his anger, he reſolves to ſacrifice his whole fortune to the object of his reproach. Yet I ſtill hope, when he ſees the lovers together, hears their mutual profeſſions of affection, and finds himſelf totally neglected, he will change his mind—and, perhaps, make up to the poor Marchioneſs.—I do think, for their family's ſake, as nobody elſe will have either of them), the two couſins ought to marry one another.

Enter Amanthis.

Aman. They told me the Marquis Almanza was here.

Duke. He is, I believe, with his couſin the Marchioneſs; and if ſo, let them remain together—don't you interrupt them.

Aman. Impoſſible I ſhould!—I can never interrupt my Lord. [*Going.*

Duke. But ſtop, Amanthis, and tell me, what have you done with Count Valantia?

Aman. Alas, poor man, do not name him to me: I think I never ſhall recover the fright he gave me in your preſence—Is it not wrong that his friends are not informed of this ſtrange diſorder in his mind, and deſired to keep a guard to watch him?

Duke. A guard! It is the Marquis, I believe, who wants a guard—and now you have put me in mind of it, I don't know but I may procure him one.

Aman. What do you mean?—is the Marquis ill? [*alarmed.*]

Duke. Yes; in the ſame way the Count is.

Aman. Oh, let me fly to him. [*Going.*

Duke. What, you are not afraid of *him*?

Aman. No—*I* will be *his* guard.

Duke. And do you pretend not to know what is the matter with your two lovers? do you pretend not to know—that love? Love is their diſorder.

Aman. "Love, love"—Ay, that's the word the Count continually repeats—and is that the name of his diſorder?

Duke. Yes.

Aman. And of the Marquis's too?

Duke. Yes.

Aman. And from whence does it proceed?

Duke. From you.

Aman.

Aman. From me?—impoſſible—I am very well.

Duke. Are you ignorant, or do you only pretend to be ſo?

Aman. I am, indeed, ignorant of what you mean.

Duke. Then I'll inſtruct you—Shame of the Marquis, to teach you moſt of the arts, and yet leave it to his old uncle to teach you the art of love.

Aman. Well, what is it? I am impatient to know.

Duke. And 'tis ſo long ago ſince I felt it, I muſt recollect a little before I can tell you.—Amongſt the paſſions, is one more troubleſome than all the reſt, and yet more pleaſing than any of them.—It ſometimes burns you with heat—and ſometimes freezes you with cold—it creates in your mind a conſtant deſire to be with one particular perſon—and when you *are* with them, you generally look like a fool.—You think them handſome, though they are frightfully ugly—you think them well ſhaped, though they are crooked—wiſe, though they are ſimpletons—and you hope they love you, though you are *ſure* they do *not*.

Aman. You need not ſay any more, Sir,—I think I have had the diſorder. [*Looking confuſed.*

Duke. You have it now.

Aman. Yes, 'tis catching—and, I ſuppoſe, I caught it of the Count, and gave it to the Marquis—and ſo we all three have it.

Duke. And it is you only who can cure them.

Aman. How?

Duke. By marrying one of them.

Aman. Is that the way?

Duke. And, now, which of them will you heal?

Aman.

Aman. Oh! the Marquis! [*With warmth.*

Duke. And would you cure him of a diſorder which makes him wiſh ever to be with you? which makes him behold you with admiration, hear you with ecſtaſy, and embrace you with tranſport?

Aman. No—not for the world would I cure him of that.

Duke. Then go and reſtore the Count.

Aman. I will; [*going, returns*] but if it muſt be by marrying him, that's impoſſible—no, I will wed the Marquis.

Duke. Did not I hear you tell the Count you loved him, and would comply with his deſires.

Aman. I did not know till now what his diſorder was.—Oh! if, by my ignorance, I have given him cauſe to ſuppoſe I will become his wife, pray, Sir, go this moment and undeceive him.—I his wife?—Oh, not for worlds!

Duke. Hear me, Madam—I have liſtened to you ſome time with patience, but now I can bear no more—the ſentiments you entertain for the Marquis are criminal, unleſs he were your huſband.

Aman. And cannot he be ſo? what prevents it?

Duke. His noble birth, and your mean one.

Aman. My poor father was a gentleman, and the Marquis loved him.

Duke. He now, if living, is an exile, and would diſgrace our family.

Aman. I thought not—he was unfortunate; but the Marquis ever taught me to reſpect and reverence misfortune.

Duke. The Marquis taught a doctrine of his own—I diſapprove his marriage with you; and I have ever been conſidered as his father.

Aman. I know it—and for a name ſo tender, I

feel every affection and veneration—but ſurely, if my Lord loved me, if his happineſs depended on my being his wife, a father, could not refuſe to give his conſent?

Duke. Do not flatter yourſelf with any hope ——you were not born for each other; and therefore *conceal* from him the affection you have betrayed to me, and he, in time, will conquer his.

Aman. No—In the face of Heaven and you, I here make a vow—[*Kneeling*]—I never will, never *can* conceal from him one emotion of my fluttering heart—that heart, which he, and only he, has taught to beat with truth, with ſenſibility, with honeſty—with love.

Duke. And now, as I have been obliged to hear your reſolution, hear mine. If he makes you his wife, he forces me to be no longer his father; no—nor will I be even his uncle—nor even his moſt diſtant relation.—I undertook to render you happy in another marriage—to teach you how to make the man you pretend to love reſpectable, and yourſelf content.—I undertook to inſtruct you how to conceal your thoughts; to laugh when you wiſhed to cry, and cry when you wiſhed to laugh—I wou'd have taught you every ſcheme, every *fineſſe*, every deception—in ſhort, I would have taught you the "art of love." [*Exit.*

Aman. Rather let me die in ignorance——Oh! my Lord, dear object of the paſſion which I have but now learned the name of, how do I long to tell you what it is—but you, it ſeems, are no ſtranger to its name or power—why then hide from me a truth that muſt encreaſe my happineſs in your ſociety?—[*Enter* Marquis.]—Oh! my dear Lord.

Marq. Before I liſten to you, Amanthis, I beg you

you will attend to what I have firſt to ſay; nor let me receive from you the ſmalleſt interruption.

Aman. You aſtoniſh me!—the alteration of your voice, the ſeverity of your looks alarm me!—you will not hear what I would ſay, and I am afraid to liſten to you—and yet I know not why I ſhould.—I was coming joyfully to open my heart to you, and, for the firſt time, you are not deſirous to be acquainted with it.

Marq. I underſtand you—I know what you came to acquaint me with.

Aman. Then your anſwer is already given—I read it in your frowns.

Marq. That ſuſpicion, Amanthis, is unjuſt—'tis injurious—[*Sternly*]—You ſhall know me better.

Aman. Oh! pardon me, my Lord—but indeed the manner in which you ſpeak, and look, gives me apprehenſions.—But proceed—I have done—I will not interrupt you.

Marq. Remember to keep that promiſe.—You know, Amanthis, I was a father to you in an age when your underſtanding could not even thank me for my cares—and ſince that time I have conſecrated to you my whole life—yet, in your education, there has been many things of which I have kept you in utter ignorance—my motives, in this, were pure, and I am now deſirous to give you my reaſons for them.—You are firſt to learn, there is a ſentiment which governs the human heart with more tyranny, more force, more outrage, and yet with more ſoftneſs, than any other—it is called—love—and why its name and nature I have thus long concealed from you, was from the apprehenſion that in the ſolitude where you lived, the ſenſibility of your heart might cauſe dangerous illuſions:—I feared you might take the tender, calm ties of friendſhip, for love's ſuperior paſſion; and ſeeing none but

but me, I ſhould conſequently become the object of your error—but, too delicate to ſeduce you, I have undone myſelf. I have juſt now been informed of all that has paſſed this day ſince you left your confinement, and of which I imagine you thought me unacquainted, and came now to inform me: but to ſpare you the declaration, I give you my reply without it.——For theſe four years I have concealed a paſſion for you of the tendereſt, trueſt, kind—but your heart decides for another, and I relinquiſh my pretenſions.—Yet do not imagine I approve your choice—Count Valantia is unworthy of you—but you are your own miſtreſs——and however you determine, you ſhall poſſeſs my fortune, and be my daughter ſtill.

Aman. The exceſs of my aſtoniſhment has alone prevented me from interrupting you many times.—You accuſe me in every ſentence—every word you have uttered upbraids—and your generoſity, above all, degrades me.—Did you imagine I could accept your favours while I was wounding your peace of mind?—did you ſuppoſe I could prefer to you a ſtranger, who, if not unworthy, I could not know to be deſerving?—And yet this is what you have expected from me.—Learn, my Lord, to be leſs ſuſpicious—affect leſs generoſity and moderation, and be leſs ungrateful and unjuſt.

Marq. Severe as your words are, they inſpire a hope my heart had baniſhed—explain yourſelf—deign——

Aman. No—you have too cruelly given me offence—you have made me bluſh at thoſe favours I have received, and ſtill more at thoſe you offer.——What have I done to make you think thus baſely of me? [*In tears.*

Marq. Behold me at your feet to atone for all I have ſaid—explain.

Aman. "Explain!"—even now he doubts me.

Marq. No—ſay but you love me with that paſſion I have deſcribed, and I will never doubt again.

Aman. Ah! can I behold you at my feet?—*you* to whom I ought to kneel as my father?—but whom I would rather thus tenderly embrace, as a lover.

Marq. [*Riſing.*]—Oh! rapture!—have I heard thoſe lips diſcloſe a paſſion ſo ſacred, and ſo dear, that my fond heart has for years concealed, yet cheriſhed.

Aman. Yes, that paſſion, though unknown for what it was, has been the joy, the happineſs of my life—it reconciled me to my ſolitude, and now could make the hardeſt lot with you a bleſſing.

Marq. And does my Amanthis know what is love—yet feel it but for me?—happineſs unlooked for—O Alberto! my abſent friend, how does my heart in this bleſt moment regret all your ſufferings with a double force!—your joy, at a moment like the preſent, had equal'd mine, and even heighten'd this unexpected tranſport.

Aman. That tender thought endears you more than ever to my heart.

Marq. The recollection of my friends, reminds me of the Marchioneſs—Amanthis, to her this diſcovery will give a pleaſure you little think of—I'll inſtantly go to her, and make her happy with the news. Adieu, my love—ſo far from expreſſing to you all that I feel at preſent, I ſcarcely can comprehend it. [*Exit.*

Aman. Sure I am now at the height of happineſs! and yet my lord's mention of my poor father, caſt for awhile a gloom over all my joys—Oh! my dear father, why are not you ſtill living to partake our bliſs! how ſhould I delight to tell you all that your friend has done for me. Ah!

who is coming this way?—a ſtranger!—another follows—let me avoid them, and fly to my Lord.

[*Exit.*

Enter two Strangers, dreſſed like Peaſants.

Second Peaſant. A young lady fled from the place this inſtant.

Peaſant. Follow her, and prevail on her to return. [*Exit ſecond Peaſant.*] My trembling frame prevents the office.—Gracious Heaven! who through various calamities haſt brought me to this ſpot, even for that benevolence I will bend in thanks, whatever be the event.

Enter ſecond Peaſant, leading Amanthis.

Second Peaſant. She is alarmed, and wiſhes to retire to the caſtle.

Peaſant. Young lady, do not fear me becauſe I am poor—I mean no harm to any—I only wiſh to aſk which are the apartments of Amanthis, and how I could ſpeak with her?

Aman. I am Amanthis.

Peaſant. Indeed!—I thought ſo by my trembling heart! [*Aſide.*] [*To her.*]—You are Amanthis?

Aman. Yes,—what would you have with me?

Peaſant. [*To the other.*] Wait at a little diſtance, and let me know if any one is coming, that I may ſteal away unſeen.

[*Exit ſecond Peaſant.*

Aman. Why theſe precautions?—what have you to ſay to me that requires them?

Peaſant. My agitation is ſo extreme, I fear I cannot hide it. [*Aſide.*

Aman. Pray ſpeak—you terrify me.

Peaſant. Do not be frightened—Ah! it is not terror I would inſpire.

Aman. [*Aſide.*] Poor man! his appearance, his apprehenſions, declare his poverty [*To him.*] Why did you come to me in this myſterious manner? —why ſend that man away who accompanied you?

Peaſant. Becauſe I wiſhed to ſpeak in ſecret to you—The man who conducted me hither is an honeſt peaſant, known in the houſe, and but, by his aſſiſtance I could obtain admittance into theſe gardens—he ſaid I had a petition to Lord Almanza, and ſought you, to beg your intereſt in my favour.

Aman. If you are in affliction, that is all the intereſt you will want with Lord Almanza.

Peaſant. Yes, I am afflicted—poor—perſecuted —forgot, no doubt, by all who were moſt dear to me, and remembered only by my enemies.

Aman. Say what I can do for you? [*Aſide.*] He bluſhes to aſk, and I'll prevent him. [*She takes from her neck a collar of pearls, and bracelets from her arms.*] Here, this is all I poſſeſs of value—take them—and how much ſoever they are worth, I am ſure I never made a better uſe of them.—Why do you weep.

Peaſant. Becauſe my joy compels me—theſe tears, young lady, expreſs my joy, not my ſorrow. I find you have a heart open to compaſſion, and now my afflictions are in leſs want of it—take back your generous gifts—for when you know who I am, you'll find they would be uſeleſs to me.

Aman. Who are you?—what is your name, your occupation, your country?—you are all emotion—why, are you afraid to truſt me?—do you fear I will betray you?—no—open then your heart.

Peaſant.

Peaſant. To do ſo will recall to your memory ſome ſcenes that may affect you.

Aman. What are they?

Peaſant. Have you preſerved in your remembrance any idea of the unhappy man to whom you owe your being?

Aman. My father—Oh, heavens! did you know him?

Peaſant. You have heard talk of him then?

Aman. Yes; and a thouſand times with my tears I have bathed his picture, the only treaſure he left me when he went away. But tell me, were you with him when he died? for though I have heard of his death, I never yet heard of one circumſtance relative to it.—Do not be afraid to ſpeak—you have ſaid too much not to proceed—to leave me now in doubt, would be the height of inhumanity.

Peaſant. Suppoſe he were not dead?

Aman. Not!—Oh, heavens!—You turn pale! your eyes are filled with tears!—Ah! how could I be ſo long miſtaken?—I know you!—I *remember* you!

[*He opens his arms, and ſhe runs into them.*

Peaſant. My daughter—my poor Amanthis!

Aman. This joy is too much!—my father!—my ſuffering father! [*Falls at his feet.*] This is the happieſt moment of my life. Let me but fly to tell my Lord Almanza, then never, never quit you more.

Alberto. [*Raiſing her.*] Alas, my child! repreſs this ecſtaſy, and learn in what a ſtate of miſery you ſee me—without fortune, without friends, without ſupport.

Aman. Are you leſs dear to me for that? beſides, your ſtate will ſoon be changed—my Lord Almanza can do much; and what he can, he'll do

do with tranſport. Within a few days we ſhall be united in marriage; and you were only wanting to complete our happineſs.

Alberto. Are you then ignorant of the horrors that ſurround me?—My enemies are become more powerful than ever; and, learning, by their ſpies, that I am ſtill living, a large reward is publiſhed for apprehending me, and my life muſt be the conſequence.

Aman. Oh, heavens!

Alberto. But hear the full extent of your poor father's miſeries. I have travelled ſandy deſerts, braved the perils of the moſt dangerous ſeas, forſook a peaceable and ſafe aſylum, to riſque the ſnares laid by my enemies here—but I came with the hope to find my child, and never again to loſe her.—I knew not your ſentiments for Almanza—Pity my error—I pleaſed myſelf with the thought, that an affectionate, ſuffering father, might be more dear to you than all the world beſides; and that in following him, and partaking his fate——

Aman. Oh, whither do you lead my imagination?—Stop, and let me take a view of what I ſee before me.

Alberto. Nay, be not thus alarmed, Amanthis. I do not command, nor even *entreat.*—In following me you had ſurely been a comfort—without fortune, without friends, nay, without ſociety, you had atoned for them all!

Aman. Oh, my father! to be your comfort in a ſtate like this, would be my happineſs—but, oh! to leave Almanza——

Alberto. You leave *him*, ſurrounded by his family—in his own country, with fortune, honours, and a thouſand bleſſings to conſole him.

Aman. No; not one for the loſs of me.

Alberto. I ſee my fate, and ſubmit to it—My child,

child, live happy, and forget me as often as you can.—Receive my bleſſing, and my laſt farewel.

[*Going to embrace her.*

Aman. [*Falling at his feet.*] In this wide world of ſorrow, I alone am left to comfort you—and at your feet I vow, though dying with deſpair, I'll follow you to the furthermoſt part of the univerſe—What did I ſay? dying! No, I will live to ſoften your pains—to be a bleſſing to you.

Alberto. Do not give me a falſe hope.

Aman. I do not—No, thus met, we will never part.—[*Firmly.*]—But how tell the news to—

Alberto. Almanza muſt not know it. I depart this very night; and one look, one unguarded word, might betray me, and prevent my eſcape.—Should you tell the Marquis, in the firſt tranſports of his grief, he'd not be enough maſter of himſelf, to conceal the ſecret.—But now conſult your heart: if you repent, you have made no promiſe; I reſtore it to you—ſpeak—pronounce.

Aman. I *have* ſpoken—*have* pronounced—have *promiſed*—and will keep my vow.

Alberto. Then have I found my child, and found her [*Embracing her*] all my fondeſt wiſhes hoped!—Adieu, my Amanthis, till a few minutes hence, when I ſhall be at the door which opens to the park—here are two keys; take one of them—[*She takes it.*]—My guide, I ſee, is coming—Adieu—Was ever parent bleſt as I am! [*Exit.*

Aman. "A few minutes hence?"—terrible—What have I done? what promiſed?—Oh, heaven! I am ſinking under a weight of miſery—a chillneſs ſeizes me—my ſtrength is nearly gone.

[*Leans againſt the ſcenes, and exit.*

SCENE

SCENE II. *An Apartment in the Caſt*

Enter Marchioneſs.

March. In every part of the houſe I ſeek in vain Amanthis—where can ſhe be?

Enter Amanthis, *pale and trembling.*

Amanthis, *I* came here to find you—the Marquis has told me—Oh, heavens! what do I ſee? you are pale as death.

Aman. 'Tis nothing, Madam—a ſudden weakneſs—what did the Marquis ſay?

March. His joy is beyond all words—intoxicated with his bliſs, he is this inſtant making preparations for your bridal day—already the gates of the caſtle are thrown open, and nothing heard but rejoicings.

Aman. Alas! I am not able to bear what I feel on the occaſion—Let me retire—and in reflection——

March. Go, and indulge the pleaſure of reflection without conſtraint.

Aman. Farewel dear Marchioneſs—when you ſee my lord, tell him—paint to him—adieu.

[*Going.*

March. Nay, ſtop—this ſudden weakneſs is more than you deſcribed—Hark—is not that Almanza?

Aman. Gracious Heaven forbid. [*Going*

March. No—'tis the Duke—Why thus alarmed?

Enter Duke.

Duke. The Marquis has overcome me—he has knelt to me, and prayed to me—and praiſed you

[*Going*

[*Going to* Amanthis] till at laſt I have reſolved to overcome, by degrees, the averſion I have to you. But if you ſhould ever prove ungrateful, and forget what he has done and ſuffered for you——

Aman. Forget! oh, impoſſible.—How he tears my heart—but the time flies—I muſt be gone—[*Aſide.*] Dear Sir, excuſe me a moment—I am going—going—impreſſed in the livelieſt manner by your goodneſs—but I cannot now reply—my heart's too full at preſent—hereafter I ſhall prove—farewell. [*Exit.*

March. What ſtrange diſorder!

Duke. All joy, becauſe ſhe is going to be married—and my nephew is much in the ſame ſtate.—it almoſt makes me wiſh to be young again—and yet, when I married, I remember I was not in ſpirits.

March. Her illneſs afflicts me.

Duke. Go, go; comfort the poor girl; and tell her, however ſhe may be alarmed by her approaching ſituation, you would be very glad to be in the ſame ſtate. [*Exit.*

March. Yes, my ſtate wants comfort moſt. But I will go to her and—[*Going, meets* Count Valantia.]

Count. I am running from place to place, inquiring of every ſoul I meet, what all this rejoicing is about? and not a creature has time to tell me—perhaps your Ladyſhip will do me that honour.

March. Is it poſſible you ſhould not know?

Count. I poſitively do not.

March. Nor can you gueſs?

Count. No—unleſs it is becauſe I am going away—for I never could be in favour with the maſter of a houſe, if he had a pretty woman in it.

March. Vain, diſappointed man!—the rejoicings are, becauſe the Marquis is ſhortly to be married to Amanthis.

Count. Poor young lady! poor young lady—and will ſhe never ſee me again? what does ſhe ſay? how does ſhe bear it? how does ſhe look?

March. She appears at the ſummit of happineſs.

Count. Nay, nay, I am ſure ſhe ſighs, and gives ſome ſigns of grief—tell me honeſtly—now lay your hand upon your heart, and tell me, if ſhe does not appear confuſed, ſorrowful, uneaſy, and diſturbed? does ſhe, or does ſhe not?

March. Why, if I muſt ſpeak, ſhe does.

Count. Poor girl, poor girl! I proteſt I feel for her.

March. But have you the vanity to ſuppoſe ſhe has theſe emotions upon your account?

Count. Certainly—and it is the only ſuppoſition that reconciles me to her loſs—for if I thought ſhe did not love me, I ſhould never be happy till I had made her—I would tear her from Almanza's arms, and *make* her love me—but ſhe does, ſhe does—and I want no other reward.

March. And did you imagine you had gained *my* love, that you became cloyed?

Count. Oh, certain of it! or I ſhould have loved you ſtill.

March. Why then, upon my honour, and as I hope for happineſs, I do *not* love you.

Count. Ay, this is all pretence—and, it won't have any effect—I can ſee by your looks, you don't ſpeak truth—and I poſitively cannot love a woman who loves me, for I know myſelf ſuch a weak, vain, impertinent, fooliſh fellow, that I muſt have a wife of a better underſtanding, than one who can value ſuch a flimſy coxcomb.

March. Hark—what alarm is that?

Enter

Enter the Duke *and* Marquis.

Marq. Amanthis is loſt, gone, ſtole from me!

Count. I hope your Lordſhip does not ſuſpect me—for however I might flatter myſelf with poſſeſſing her affections, I certainly ſhould not have ſtolen her away, without going along with her.

Marq. I do ſuſpect you—draw.

[*The* Duke *interpoſes.*

March. [*To the* Duke.] Dear, my Lord, don't prevent the Marquis; is he not in his own houſe? and ſurely he may treat his gueſt as he pleaſes.

Count. [*Aſide.*] Egad, I begin to ſuſpect ſhe does not love me.

Duke. Nephew, you muſt not reſent without better proofs—though Amanthis is fled, it muſt be by her own conſent; for was not a key found on the inſide the door, by which ſhe eſcaped? and, no doubt, ſhe unlocked it herſelf.

Marq. I have loſt her; what is it to me, whether by force or fraud?

[*A voice behind the ſcenes.*

Amanthis is returned.

Enter ſeveral Servants of the Houſe. The Marquis drops his ſword, and runs impatiently to the door at which they entered.

Marq. Gracious Heaven!

Enter Alberto, *ſuperbly dreſſed, leading on* Amanthis.

Alberto. 'Tis I who am the raviſher—and thus reſign my prize to one, whoſe right, by every tie of gratitude, is ſuperior.

Marq. My Amanthis, tell me, do I dream, or do I know that voice?—Yes, 'tis my friend Alberto! [*They embrace*] And do I receive Amanthis from thy hand?—and can I ſee you here, without apprehenſions for your ſafety?

Alberto. Yes; for my unjuſt ſentence is revoked, and my misfortunes at an end.—In the Indies, where my diſtreſſes carried me, I did ſome ſervice for my native country, for which I have been repaid with honours, and with riches.

March. My dear Amanthis! how ſincerely do I rejoice to ſee you happy as you merit!

[*To* Amanthis.

Count. Madam, I ſincerely hope you are happy, and that no remembrance of me, may ever diſturb your tranquillity.

Duke. I'll anſwer for that.

Marq. Count, I have to beg your pardon for a ſuſpicion——

Count. I aſſure you, my Lord, you did me honour by it—where a Lady is the ſubject, I like to be ſuſpected.

Alberto. And now, Almanza, ſay you pardon me the momentary pang I gave you while I made trial of my daughter's filial love—a trial which has added to my happineſs—for never was a moment half ſo precious, as when I beheld duty and compaſſion conquering every felicity that awaited her.

Aman. Oh, my father—I forget all my ſorrows paſt, in my preſent joy.

Duke. I think we ſeem all extremely happy—every one, except the poor Count.

Count. The *poor* Count, Sir!——

Duke. Yes—you like to be ſuſpected; and I muſt own I ſuſpect at this time——

Count. What, Sir?

Duke. A lady is in the caſe, ſo don't be angry.

March. If I am the object, I here proteſt——

Count. Come—if you will ſwear that you have no regard for me, and that you will never by any part of your conduct prove you have, marry me; and I will be the moſt conſtant, faithful huſband—

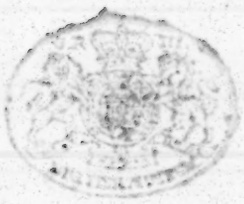
March. You are ſo indifferent to me at preſent, I think I may venture.

Count. But remember, the firſt time you are in love, I am ſo no longer.

Duke. Take him, and at leaſt reſpect him that he is no hypocrite—for all lovers are the ſlaves of caprice, though few have the virtue to acknowledge it.

March. I *will* take him; for, with all my care, I might do worſe—To love with ſincerity and judgment, is only reſerved for ſuperior minds—few beings, ſuch as Almanza and his—Child of Nature.

THE END.



EPILOGUE,

Written by MILES-PETER ANDREWS, Eſq.

Spoken by Mrs. MATTOCKS.

MEN are ſtrange things—'twere happy cou'd we
ſcout 'em,
Make up our minds, and fairly do without 'em.
The cautious dame prefers a ſingle life,
The antient maiden to the anxious wife;
For her no abſent mate, no tender fear,
Dews the fond cheek with nature's lovelieſt tear;
For her no prattling race, in ſweet employ,
Awake the tranſport of maternal joy;—
Contented fair, ſecure from nuptial fuſs,
She ſits all day to comb her fav'rite puſs;
Now kindly chirrups to dicky bird, and now
Binds the pink ribband round the dear bow-vow.

Theſe are delights ſuperior far to mine;
Ah! how cou'd I to ſuch a ſwain incline?
A ſtrange, capricious, wild, eccentric rover,
Who felt no paſſion till my flame was over;
Sued for my hatred as his beſt reward,
And dreaded nothing but his wife's regard!
Take courage, batchelors, your fears ſuſpend,
Few modiſh wives will ever ſo offend;
Trace the gay circles, and you'll rarely prove
That wedlock ſuffers from immod'rate love.

"Loch!" ſays Miſs Dolly Drylips, an old maid,
"I wonder the young flirts are not afraid—
"The Child of Nature!—I ſuppoſe that means
"To have two lovers ere ſhe's in her teens—

"I'm

" I'm out of mine—but yet, may wedlock ſeize me!
" If any naſty man has dar'd to teize me!"—

" What does the creature mean: cries Widow Waddle,
" By flirts, and naſty men, and fiddle-faddle?
" We're born to love and cheriſh, great and ſmall;—
" I've had five huſbands, and I lov'd them all—
" I hates to fondle dogs, and cats, and ſtuff;
" I always walks upright, and that's enough." [*Waddles.*

The Child of Nature was, in days of yore,
What, much I fear, we ſhall behold no more,
The ſimple dreſs, the bloom that art wou'd ſhame,
The frank avowal, and the gen'rous flame;
The native note, which, ſweetly warbling wild,
Told the ſoft ſorrows of the charming child—
Turn to a modern Miſs, whoſe feather'd brow
Speaks the light ſurface of the ſoil below,
Whoſe little noſe its due concealment keeps,
And o'er a muſlin mountain barely peeps,
Taught by Signor to ſquall ſhe knows not what,
Thumping the harpſichord, is all ſhe's at.
" Papa," a true John Bull, cries, " Nancy, ſing—
" Give us my fav'rite tune, ' God ſave the King.'
Miſs, ſimp'ring, ſays, ' Pa', now I'm grown a woman,
' I can't ſing Engliſh muſic, it's ſo common;
' But, if you pleaſe, I'll give you a bravara,
' For Signor ſays I ſoon ſhall equal Mara.'
[*Imitates an ignorant Miſs, ſinging.*

Thus are the feelings of the youthful day,
By faſhion's raging tempeſt whirl'd away:—
May I, but with no wiſh to under-rate her,
Entreat you to prefer our Child of Nature?

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